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ABSTRACT

White males represent only 46 percent of the U.S. work force. Within a few years, 75 percent of those entering the labor force will be women and minorities, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. The work force is getting smaller as well as changing in nature. To attract and keep the most qualified and productive workers, businesses must make changes in their management policies and practices that few employers or workers have anticipated or are prepared for. Among the companies that have promoted the benefits of a multicultural, diversified work force are Procter and Gamble, Digital Equipment Corporation, Avon, Xerox, Mobile, Honeywell, Colgate-Palmolive, and Ortho Pharmaceutical. For example, Procter and Gamble has established special mentoring programs to help bring women and blacks into management by providing them information about organizational styles of management, leadership, communication, and networking. Digital Equipment Corporation has started a program to create management awareness of attitudes and assumptions about races and genders and how those attitudes and assumptions influence company and employee policies and behaviors. To manage a diversified work force, managers must learn to be sensitive to the cultural influences among their employees. Cross-cultural training is also crucial to success in international markets, as U.S. companies compete in a global market and form joint ventures that require the transfer of employees across continents. (18 annotated resources) (CML)

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THE MULTICULTURAL WORK FORCE

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Demographic data and labor trends confirm what is already known--the traditional work force of the past, one composed largely of white males, no longer exists. Today, women and minorities represent an increasing percentage of working Americans, with white males representing only 46 percent of those employed. The U.S. Department of Labor projects that within a few years, 75 percent of all people entering the work force will be women and minorities. If other population groups (Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and others) continue to increase at the current rate, cultural diversity in the workplace will be guaranteed.

At the same time that the work force is changing in nature, it is also changing in size. Employers will find fewer entry-level workers to select for employment and the competition for them will be great. To attract and keep the most qualified and productive workers, businesses will need to change their management policies and practices. Although change in all things is inevitable, the changes required in progressing from a homogeneous to a multicultural work force are ones few employers or workers have anticipated or are prepared to address.

Among the pioneers promoting the benefits of a multicultural, diversified work force are companies like Procter and Gamble, Digital Equipment Corporation, Avon, Mobile, Xerox, Honeywell, Colgate-Palmolive, and Ortho Pharmaceutical, a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson. These companies are initiating programs to help their employees understand their organizations and each other. Procter and Gamble, for example, has established special mentoring programs to help bring women and Blacks into the mainstream of company management (Copeland 1988c). Such programs are needed to clarify for women and minorities the unwritten rules and cultural values of an organization. Information about organizational styles of management, leadership, communication, and networking must be communicated to this set of workers so they too can navigate upward in the company.

To address the multicultural characteristics of the work force, Digital Equipment Corporation (Copeland 1988c) has initiated a "value differences" program to create management awareness of stereotypes--attitudes and assumptions about races and genders--and how they influence company/employee policies and behaviors. Dissatisfied with high job turnover and lack of female and minority representation in upper management, Ortho Pharmaceutical's president and board of directors hired a consultant to conduct for them a 3-day workshop on the same topic (Copeland 1988c). Later, they offered the workshop to their senior and middle managers and supervisors. Efforts like these are forerunners in companies' attempts to help their employees understand each other and the unique attitudes, behaviors, and habits representative of various cultures. Armed with this information, managers and workers alike can be more effective in their dealings with each other.

For example, managers and supervisors need to be aware that methods of offering praise (or criticism) differ across cultures. Americans respond to personal recognition--they like to be singled out for their achievements. They are used to clear communication--even when it is to point out that they are doing something wrong. Japanese people, on the other hand, are team players. To single out one member of a group of Japanese workers for praise (or criticism) can cause great discomfort. To manage a diversified work force, managers must learn to be sensitive to unique differences.

Cross-cultural training is also crucial to success in international markets. Today, U.S. companies are heavily engaged in international business, forming joint ventures that require the transfer of employees across continents. "Intercultural relationships are fragile. Countless hazards are created by communication problems, differences in motivational and value systems, diverse codes of conduct, and even differences in orientation to fundamentals such as perceptions of time and space" (Copeland 1985, p. 51). Businesses and employees need cross-cultural skills to be competitive. For this reason, the lead established by companies that have recognized the benefits of empowering a multicultural work force and are working toward this end will offer direction to others that are just beginning to address this issue.

This *Trends and Issues Alert* provides resources that can be used in meeting the challenges posed by work force diversity.

Print Resources

Chan, C. *How to Communicate Better with Clients, Customers, and Workers Whose English Is Limited*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, 1989. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 304 942).

Designed for supervisors, co-workers, and others, this booklet explores consequences of faulty communication, examination of personal assumptions, and ways to improve communication.

Chute, A. G., and Shatzer, L. S. "Designing for International Teletraining." In *International Teleconference Association 1989 Yearbook*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 313 017).

Although teletraining can bridge geographically distant populations, its success requires appropriate awareness of cultural differences and their integration in instructional design.

Copeland, L. "Training Americans to Do Business Overseas." *Training* 21, no. 7 (July 1984): 22-33. (ERIC No. EJ 300 942).

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U.S. multinational organizations must face the reality that their work force lacks international or intercultural competence.

Copeland, L. "Cross-Cultural Training: The Competitive Edge." *Training* 25, no. 7 (July 1985): 49-53. (ERIC No. EJ 317 911).

Illustrates some of the differences that cause problems for Americans working with people from other countries, here or abroad.

Copeland, L. "Learning to Manage a Multicultural Work Force." *Training* 25, no. 5 (May 1988a): 48-51, 55-56. (ERIC No. EJ 369 880).

Retraining managers to supervise, develop, and retain workers from different cultural backgrounds should include information on stereotypes and assumptions, unwritten rules, membership, and cultural differences.

Copeland, L. "Valuing Diversity, Part 1: Making the Most of Cultural Differences at the Workplace." *Personnel* 65, no. 6 (June 1988b): 52-60. (ERIC No. EJ 371 538).

Human resource managers who value cultural diversity as a source of enrichment and opportunity can bring a wealth of benefits to a company.

Copeland, L. "Valuing Diversity, Part 2: Pioneers and Champions of Change." *Personnel* 65, no. 7 (July 1988c): 44-49. (ERIC No. EJ 372 989).

Model corporate programs to address the cultural deprivation of many white, male managers are described.

Geber, B. "Managing Diversity." *Training* 27, no. 7 (July 1990): 23-30.

Describes ways to change organizational systems, structures, and practices to eliminate subtle barriers and enhance workplace relationships, including awareness training, attitude change, and valuing diversity.

Henry, W. A., III. "Beyond the Melting Pot." *Time* 135, no. 15 (April 9, 1990): 28-31.

In the 21st century, racial and ethnic groups in the United States will outnumber whites for the first time. A multicultural society will be a challenge to govern and educate, and the definitions of the nation's way of life and institutions may change.

Isonio, S. A., and Garza, R. T. "Protestant Work Ethic Endorsement among Anglo Americans, Chicanos, and Mexicans." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 9, no. 4 (December 1987): 413-424. (ERIC No. EJ 370 926).

Analyzes cultural differences in orientation toward work and leisure among ethnic groups.

O'Neill, V. "Training the Multi-Cultural Manager." In *Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions. Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference*. Ypsilanti: Eastern Michigan University, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 293 349).

A West German electronics corporation designed a workshop to help managers communicate with U.S. business partners through awareness of U.S. communication styles, modes of expression, value patterns, and communication cues.

Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions. Ypsilanti: Eastern Michigan University, 1988. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 304 882). Among the 89 papers are the following:

Armstrong, R. N.; Sisson, R.; and Page, J. H. "Cross-Cultural Communication Training in Business: A Sensitizing Module." (ED 304 903).

Five-phase training module includes discussion of "outsider" experiences, membership in subcultures and subgroups, shared characteristics of culturally diverse individuals, cross-cultural simulation, and debriefing.

Ben-Joseph, M. "Designing and Delivering Cross-Cultural Instruction." (ED 304 898).

Describes a course on management in a cross-cultural environment using critical incidents, short stories, proverbs, games, and films.

Dukes, T. "Whar You From?: Teaching Cultural Differences in the Business Communication Classroom." (ED 304 899).

Presents exercises designed to reduce provincialism and heighten cultural awareness.

Ogden, J. D. "Designing Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs for Business." (ED 304 901).

A 1-day orientation workshop addresses concepts of intercultural communication, awareness of oneself as a cultural being, and nonverbal codes.

Victor, D. A. "Ethical Considerations in Designing the International Business Communication Course." (ED 304 900).

Addresses a dilemma facing persons working in multicultural situations: At what point should one reject the norms and values of one's own culture to accommodate those of another?

Stolovitch, H. D., and Lane, M. "Multicultural Training: Designing for Affective Results." *Performance and Instruction* 28, no. 6 (July 1989): 10-15. (ERIC No. EJ 398 037).

Describes a multicultural awareness program for Montreal bus drivers designed to improve their attitudes toward and services to multicultural customers.

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